

THE GREEN CALDRON

A Magazine of Freshman Writing



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Fancy and the Child

CHARLES N. WATKINS

Rhetoric I, Theme 11, 1946-1947

AS A SMALL BOY, I WAS ALWAYS "OUT WOOL-GATHERING." I daydreamed continually, from morning until night. Mother had to speak to me several times to gain my attention so that I would do her errands. When I finally did an errand, it usually required at least an hour; for, as a rule, I was so preoccupied with my own thoughts that I spent most of my time dawdling. I found so much of interest on the way, that often as not I forgot the task to which I had been assigned. Mother always believed there was something wrong with me physically, and so she made frequent trips, with me in tow, to the doctor. I do not think, however, that he gave her much satisfaction. Once the doctor gave the verdict "worms," and I was placed accordingly on a castor oil diet. This treatment enabled me to gain more weight, but I continued to be as unresponsive and inattentive as ever. My teachers had the same difficulty in holding my attention, and for several years, regularly with my report cards, Mother received little notes which invariably read: "Charles has been doing poor work in most of his subjects. He is inattentive and has a 'don't care' attitude. I think he is capable of doing the work if he puts his mind to it."

Mother and Dad scolded long and loud and occasionally emphasized their scolding with a razor strop. Sometimes I was retained by the teacher at recesses for inattention in class. It would have been just as profitable to have chastized a mechanical dummy.

Though Mother's worries were for my physical well-being, the real cause for my unconcern and absent-mindedness was the world in which I dwelt. It was a realm of fiction and unreality in which Robin Hood and Little John dwelt in our orchard and King Arthur and his knights held court in our horse barn. It was a land of romance in which gallant men had nothing to do but ride about the countryside doing good deeds and avenging wrongs. This make-believe land was a bright and happy or a weird and melancholy place, depending upon my mood, where there was always excitement.

This dream world, where I spent so much time mentally, was partially the result of a vivid imagination and the absorption of fascinating literature. Mother taught me to read at an early age, because she wanted me to do well in my school work; and, too, she had been a school teacher before marriage and enjoyed teaching. As a result, I was always much more advanced in reading than the other pupils in my class. I was also encouraged to read as my parents enjoyed good books. The bookshelves in the parlor were well

stocked with many of the old classics and a variety of modern novels. The only requisite for taking a book from the shelf was that it be replaced. When I was ten years old, I had read every book in the family library plus all the other books which I could obtain from other sources; but, because of immaturity and the added habit of rapid scanning, I often misunderstood the material which I read.

For example, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, by Washington Irving, was not humorous. The "Headless Horseman" was real to me, and I did not comprehend that his "head," which rode on the saddle before him, was only a pumpkin. Furthermore, I did not know that the Headless Horseman was Beau Brummel. Believing as I did in goblins and ghosts, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* was a source of terror for many years. My mind's eye saw the Headless Horseman overtaking Ichabod at the bridge which spanned the creek flowing through our farm. When bringing the cows across the bridge at dusk, I always rushed over the bridge as fast as possible, for I had no desire to meet the Headless Horseman.

Another story which confused and frightened me was *Alice in Wonderland*. My mind was unable to keep pace with the course of events carrying Alice through the strange land. I always partially doubted that a person could eat or drink any substance or liquid which would alter his size. Even so, I was tempted many times to taste the contents of unlabeled discarded bottles to see if I would become larger or smaller. It is probably just as well that I did not yield to such temptations.

Of all the literature which I read in my boyhood, none was so delightful or so romantic as the tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. I virtually "lived" King Arthur, and many of the games which my brothers and I played had their origin in the King Arthur stories. My two younger brothers and I became knights. Our "shining armor" consisted of old barrel-heads for shields, wooden swords made from lath, and cornstalks or horseweed stalks for spears. There was many a hard and long battle fought — and many a black eye and cut lip. What wonderful times we had! My over-imaginative brain usually placed the scenes in my reading in familiar surroundings; thus, the horse barn became the castle where King Arthur held court; the adjacent hog house was the stable where the spirited chargers were kept; and the cattle yard was the jousting field where great battles were fought.

Losing interest in knights, I became a "cowboy." This phase began after I had read a cheap novel, *Keith of the Border*, and after I had seen my first movies, which happened to be Western movies. My brothers and I forgot about armor and jousting and became interested in guns and horses and the range. As a cowboy I once attempted to rope a "steer," which happened to be a few-weeks-old calf. Because of my slightly erring aim, the lasso fell about the neck of a year-old heifer. This surprised bossy immediately

galloped off. The free end of the rope was twisted about my arm so that she dragged me behind her through the mud, until the hired man rescued me. We also acquired a pony about this time. The pony helped the cowboy illusion, although it was indeed disconcerting trying to imagine myself a "lone cowboy" with my two younger brothers on behind me, and with the youngest one usually bellowing at the top of his lungs because he was sliding off the rear of the pony. As cowboys, we were such famous men as Wyatt Earp, Buffalo Bill Cody, and Wild Bill Hickock. The great western plain was limited by the east pasture. Dozens of "bad men" were shot daily. The cowboy phase lasted until we became "gangsters."

With a love for the unnatural, the unreal, and the romantic, I dramatized places, people, playthings, and incidents which probably seemed commonplace enough to most people, but which held special meanings for me. One of the places loaded with stimulus for an active imagination was the creek, a lazy stream bordered by cottonwoods and willows which meandered across the farm. It was an ideal setting for the role of Tarzan of the Apes, my favorite comic strip star. Clad in my nothing plus, I wandered aimlessly along the "dark, murky Amazon" killing snakes and chasing dragonflies, the only "enemies" I could find. A tile, which drained the highlands, emptied into the creek. I used to stand under the flow of cool water from the tile and see myself in the spray of one of Africa's many beautiful waterfalls. I tried swinging on the wild grapevines festooning the trees along the banks. When a grapevine broke with me in midair, however, I decided that accomplishment would have to be missing from my portrayal of Tarzan. For a budding Tarzan, a boy never had a better jungle than I had in the creek. But the creek was not the only source of inspiration for wild imaginings. On the north side of the house, in the foundation, was a small hole shaped like a little door. I spent a great deal of time romancing about that defect in the concrete. What kind of little people lived there? What lay beyond that tiny door? Just as incredible were the transformations which changed the gravel pit to the Badlands of South Dakota. This gravel pit was a large hole in the side of a hill from which gravel had been taken at different times for use around the farm. There were wonderful tall banks in which my brothers and I often dug caves for "hideouts," ideal for fugitive "bad men." The mounds of earth which had been thrown up in the search for pure gravel made magnificent breast works and shielded many a "hardened criminal" from the withering fire of the "law." When I was alone in the gravel pit, I often imagined myself a lone traveler, usually mounted on a dying horse and needing food and water. With grim courage and perseverance, I always shot my dying horse and struggled on alone to safety.

Certain people impressed me very much, although I know now that most of those impressions were erroneous. Granddad was the most romantic figure I knew. He was a small man with a silvery thatch of hair and an old-

fashioned moustache. Because of his physical appearance and age, I thought he must have been an Indian fighter. He had a Winchester pump-action caliber .22 rifle, and I was certain that Granddad was the best shot in the country; but this illusion was destroyed one day during butchering time. Whenever we butchered hogs, Granddad had to be present to do the killing. On this particular day, he came out to the farm, bringing with him his Winchester rifle. The hog to be killed was chased out of his pen. He took a long, careful aim and fired. Simultaneously with the shot, the hog dropped, and Granddad clapped his hand to his head. The next instant the hog was on his feet again nonchalantly eating corn, and in the brim of Granddad's hat lay the spent bullet. He had missed the vital spot on the hog's head and the bullet had ricocheted from the hard bone, striking Granddad's hat. Granddad never shot another hog.

While I worshipped Granddad, my cousin caused me much nervousness and unrest. He was a tall, thin boy who worked for my father one winter. He was very quiet, in fact almost sullen. He had an honest to goodness revolver which he carried in his belt or in his pocket a great deal of the time. Every other day or so he held target practice, usually squatting on his heels and firing at tin cans. During these frequent practices, the expressions which played over his face made icy fingers move up and down my spine. The methodical, purposeful way with which he shot the tin cans to pieces was nothing short of murderous. I felt that he could shoot men as easily as he did the tin cans. Upon several occasions I almost confessed this strange premonition to Mother, but I never did for fear she would have laughed. When I grew older, I learned that he had read too many "dime westerns," and that he might have become a criminal but for the fact that he was too lazy. He was a daydreamer in his own right.

The jolliest, nicest man I knew was one of our neighbors. He was fat, always laughing, and the life of the party wherever he went. In later years, I discovered that our neighbor was silly rather than humorous. His jokes were old and his banter trivial. All the women were afraid of him, for he considered himself a ladies' man and was quite a "wolf."

Living on the farm, my brothers and I had a natural interest in farm equipment and farm operations. Therefore, most of our playthings became real machinery in our games. Our coaster wagon was the most loved and most used plaything. It served as our "tractor," and it was used to pull everything. The driver rode in the wagon, while the one who pushed had to simulate the noise of a tractor engine. Naturally, all of us wanted to "drive." This game gave us sore throats and shattered mother's nerves. When threshing was in season on the farm, we "threshed" also. The lawn mower served as a threshing machine; the rake made a realistic blower. Behind the wagon "tractor" we pulled our "threshing machine," going from one "farm" to

another "threshing each other's grain." To thresh the grain I blocked up one wheel of the lawn mower and turned that wheel while another put dry grass into the revolving blades. Thus we threshed.

But of all our toys, Bobby, the doll, was in a class of his own. He was quite large with painted hair and a polka dot dress. Because he was agreeable with any plan, he was included in many games. One winter morning, however, Bobby met his downfall. It was too cold to play out-of-doors, and so we were confined to the living room while Mother went about her housework. In the mischievous manner of all small boys, someone (I am not sure which one of us) busied himself with the mutilation of a book, which had been lying on the table. When Mother discovered the destruction, she immediately called for the culprit. But no one was willing to admit his guilt; therefore, we three boys agreed that Bobby must be at fault. This information was relayed to Mother, who promptly whipped each of us soundly. Before the tears had subsided, we knew that Bobby must be punished for not being courageous enough to confess his crime. Whereupon, we took the offender behind the kitchen stove and smashed his china head with a hammer. And so the wrong was righted.

There were many incidents in my childhood which affected me deeply. Of these, at least two stand out in my memory. One was the story of the "woman in black." I first heard the story on a dark summer night while visiting a Mrs. Dennis with my aunt. The story, as I remember it, was that a woman dressed in black had mysteriously appeared in Rockford, Illinois, and had predicted that the Chicago World's Fair would sink into Lake Michigan. My aunt and Mrs. Dennis obviously believed the story; their voices were hushed and filled with a strange, subdued note of mystery. I was thoroughly frightened. When I visited the World's Fair the next spring, the thought that the very ground upon which I walked might fall away into the lake was always before me.

The most fantastic feat of my imagination was perhaps an illusion concerning my father's snoring. On hot summer nights, I often slept on the floor in front of the parlor door, where there was generally a cool breeze. My mother and dad slept in the room adjacent to the parlor. From the parlor I could hear the creaking of the windmill located in the north pasture some eighty rods away. I suppose that in one of my half-asleep moments my father's snoring attained a whistle-like quality and became confused in my mind with the faraway creaking of the windmill. I was never able to separate the two sounds, and even today, when I hear a windmill squealing for lack of grease, I think of Dad's snoring.

Now that I am considered an adult, my childhood fancies have vanished, somewhat to my regret. As a child grows older, the fascination of stories, places, and playthings is lost. The coaster wagon lost its appeal as a tractor

when we had to haul coal and cobs in it for the kitchen stove. The lawn mower became a dreaded piece of equipment, a machine of the devil's own making. After rereading *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* under a teacher's supervision, I discovered that the story was funny and not frightening. The creek was no longer a jungle paradise but a hot steamy place in summer and a cold wet place in winter. In the summer, I had to cut weeds along its banks, and, in the winter, I sawed wood. In a way, I wish that these childhood fancies and figments of my imagination still were with me. I suspect that a psychologist would classify me as a case of arrested development. But, nevertheless, the world in which I lived as a child was a fair one. There was no drudgery, and no headaches. The only wars fought were exciting. The "dead in battle" were allowed to participate in the next skirmish. In my world of dreams, there were no lusts, no desires for wealth or power, no politics, and no labor troubles. Everything was on the highest plane.

But such a world is, of course, only for children, and small children at that. I must forget that I am a gallant knight in shining armor and take my place among the men of the world and share in their greeds, in their lusts, and in their desires. I must take my place in the world; I must be a success.

Dear Days, Dead

MARTIN F. BRETZ

Rhetoric I, Theme 11, 1946-1947

AMONG LARGE, BLACK, NOISY, SMELLY FACTORIES, IN soot-blackened homes, lived the people who, because of the depression, could not afford to move. They worked hard, these people, and tried to make each penny stretch to help carry them over the bad times. We, their children, didn't realize the need for such tight-fistedness. We missed our penny grab-bags of candy, our chewing gum, and nickel picture shows. It was useless to ask "Pop" for "dough." He never had any. And "Ma" wouldn't give any because there was always a need for it somewhere else. It wasn't impossible to earn money; you could sell papers or magazines, but then the "big guys" would take your money from you. You could call on Pop to convoy you, but he wasn't always available, and rather than have you get hurt, he would forbid you to sell anything. One of the gang solved the financial problem: "Let's collect junk and sell it to the junkman. The big guys won't touch us if we all take the stuff to the junkyard and come home together."

So we became connoisseurs of junk and learned to distinguish one type of metal from another. We sold the metals by the pound. Aluminum was the

most expensive at ten cents a pound; steel was the cheapest at three cents per one hundred pounds. Since we lived in an industrial area, our supply of junk was unlimited until the day the factories started to save their scrap.

With our scrap supply gone, we had to resort to vandalism to get metals. The rain gutters on the factories were fastened to the roofs by straps of copper, and for awhile our supply of copper was adequate. It was strenuous work climbing the factory walls; it required the use of long, thin fingers and strong hands to secure a firm hold in the many cracks and holes in the walls. Only those possessing these qualities were delegated to do the climbing. The rest of us remained behind to catch the copper straps, and eventually the rain gutter as its support on the roof was removed. Should a watchman put in an appearance, we would each head in a different direction, and every man would look out for himself. Those of us on the ground were more fortunate than those stranded on the roofs. Once a watchman surprised one of our boys by coming up through the skylight. The boy raced desperately along the flat roof to its edge, and leaped into space. We saw him land on another roof ten feet below the first; then with a clash and clatter of tin covering he fell through the flimsy, old factory roof. A minute later he dashed out of the factory door and scampered down the street while the watchman loudly cursed.

All of the soft metals we accumulated we pounded and smashed with rocks and hammers into as compact a bundle as possible so that we could store them in the small wooden shanty we used as a warehouse. Because of this practice the copper washtub belonging to the mother of one of the boys went the way of all soft metals we got our hands on. It was the biggest smashing job we'd had, and our enjoyment in banging and clanging on the tub was unbounded until its owner put in her appearance. She didn't say a word. It seemed strange to us because she didn't scream and rage at us as all the women of the neighborhood did at one time or another. She just took her son firmly by the arm and forcibly dragged him home. The look in her eyes made us glad to be our mothers' sons and not hers.

As materials became scarcer, our methods of procuring them became more drastic. A few blocks from our shanty warehouse, on the other side of the railroad tracks, there were shabby, empty shanty homes. We didn't know who owned the homes. They never were occupied, but they contained electrical wires of copper; that is, they contained electrical wires until we got to them. With small crowbars and hammers hidden in our clothing to conceal our purpose, we broke into the homes, and amid falling plaster and ripping wall paper removed all of the wiring.

When the city decided to repair the streetcar tracks in our neighborhood, its appropriations for the repairs failed to take into account the materials we confiscated. We would mingle with the group of children who always

managed to show up and get in the way of the workmen whenever some public street repairs were being made. We kept out of the way, but the workmen's materials went with us.

The junkman we dealt with had his office set up in the city junk heaps. It was a new brick warehouse that looked out of place among the rotting garbage, tin cans, and rubble. He was a small, thin, bent man, always shabbily dressed, and in need of a shave and bath. He was quite adept at cheating us when weighing our junk, and every now and then he would simply and forcibly take our junk from us without offering us any remuneration. The boys all disliked him, and in a fit of rage, after he'd taken some of our junk without paying us, we decided to get revenge. That night and several nights after, we went to work on a corner of his warehouse. We removed enough bricks to permit one of the boys to crawl through the hole and pass the stored junk out to us. When we had all we could carry, we piled rubbish and old garbage over the hole and went home. The next day we resold the junk to him. He had so much of it that he wasn't able to recognize the stuff. It seemed just and right to us, not funny. We cheated him out of quite a good deal, but one night, about a month after we'd made the hole, our revenge had to stop. We found the hole repaired and knew that he would inspect his building quite often now.

Our money-making scheme ended when the city built a modern highway through its dumps. The junkman had to leave, and the junk heaps were replaced by lawns and trees.

Keeping Them Contented

GRACE HARTMAN

Rhetoric I, Theme 7, 1946-1947

A SWEET, GRINNING, HAPPY CHILD IS, AS WE ALL KNOW, an irresistible attraction. But there's also another side to the story. I'm not attempting to take the part of the Voice of Experience or an authority on child psychology, but after several years of babysitting, I have gleaned some useful ideas in entertaining a child. First of all, if you are one of those unfortunate individuals who have neither an ounce of patience nor at least a slight love for "little ones," the best advice would be that you resort to some other means of income than staying with children.

Upon arrival at the job, you must often solve two problems — getting acquainted with the child and convincing him that his "mamma" and "daddy" are coming back. I don't suggest the use of the word "soon"; it seems to mean "in a few minutes" to most children. A previous knowledge

of your charge's name, age, and grade in school will be helpful. Remember, children can dream up some very convincing stories. I know! I very gullibly listened to kindergarten tales from a "five year old" who, I later found out, was reaching his fourth birthday. A rule that can usually be applied is to ask the child his age and then subtract about one or two years. (Not that children are liars — they just exaggerate!) One sure way to become a friend of the child is to exclaim over her new shiny patent leather sandals or his new red fire truck. Little need be said about the pessimistic side of meeting the child. If he decides to take a strong dislike to you from the first, I can only express my sympathies and hopes that his parents will come home early. I've had such experiences — even to the extent of an anxious neighbor's investigating the screams of the deserted child.

As to the actual entertaining of the child, I have discovered one particularly effective and profitable way. Invariably, you will have taken something to occupy your time when the child is asleep in bed. Once the child finds this, your evening is all arranged. I found last year that a physics book held great fascination because of the many pictures and diagrams. Also, I entertained by reading out of my German book for a half hour one night. Knitting serves the same purpose. Boxes of letter writing materials are excellent playthings. But you must be careful to hide your fountain pen, because ink on the rug or chair creates an awkward situation when parents return home. Be sure to include several sheets of scratch paper in your writing box. Drawing pictures results in great satisfaction — your "audience" is both attentive and appreciative. (And if you draw anything the way I do, this will be the only time when your artistic endeavors are respected.) Be prepared to sketch a portrait of the child, probably one of her mother and father, and possibly one of Aunt Molly. These pictures should be destroyed after the child is in bed.

In case the child has been taught to perform for visitors, it will be time-consuming to encourage her to dance for you, recite a jingle, show you the "Teddy Bear" stunt, or even sing. An asset is the ability to read the melody of music, so that you can recognizably play the tunes in the *Peter Pan Songbook*. Children always enjoy showing you how they can read or at least pretend to read. Just let them "rattle" on without interruption. Don't even remind them that they're holding the book upside down.

When bed-time is nearing you must begin saying, "This is the last story" about a half hour before you actually plan to stop. The chances are that you'll be either carrying or coaxing a crying child up the stairs to his bedroom. But, remember, if you let him run his own bath water, play with the soap dish in the tub, squirt the toothpaste out of the tube, you will soon have him calmly in bed. Then you listen to his prayers several times, say your prayers for him, give him his favorite stuffed animal to hug, and he soon will be peacefully off to sleep — you hope!

Should Congress Establish a Permanent FEPC?

LEE CADWELL

Rhetoric II, Theme 13, 1946-1947

AS A RESULT OF ACTION TAKEN BY A. PHILLIP RANDOLPH, Negro President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802 on June 25, 1941, establishing a wartime Fair Employment Practice Commission. Randolph had organized the "March on Washington," protesting the existing labor conditions in the country, and he had refused to abandon his plan until Roosevelt set up the FEPC.¹ This order provided that "there shall be no discrimination in the employment of any person in defense industries or in the Government by reason of race, creed, color, or national origin"² and covered employers with six or more workers "engaged in interstate or foreign commerce or in operations affecting such commerce," and labor unions.³ The purpose of the order was to place unemployed members of minority groups in defense production where they normally would have been denied employment.

Discriminatory practices in labor unions have long been practiced. Either by actual provisions in their constitutions or by ritual, many American unions have excluded Negroes from membership. The railroad unions have been particularly instrumental in fostering prejudice; skilled craft unions, fearful of losing a larger share of the available jobs and the higher wages, have operated under a discriminatory policy. Although the AF of L started out claiming a policy of racial equality, this policy hindered its development, since smaller unions refused to affiliate under this stipulation. In 1900 a plan for organizing Negroes into local Jim Crow units was devised. This has made it impossible for the Negro workers to hold an equal opportunity for securing work, since they are in competition with the local white units. Principally because it gains its strength by being an open organization, the CIO has adhered to a non-discriminatory policy, although there has been the tendency for whites to regard white priority as the accepted order. Union leaders have had particular difficulty in dealing with the Southerners, who refuse to base promotion on seniority of tenure and ability and who object to Negroes' receiving any better paid jobs.⁴ Oddly enough, the heads of both

¹ "Filibuster Kills FEPC Bill," *Christian Century*, 63 (Feb. 20, 1946), 227.

² Herbert R. Northrup, *Organized Labor and the Negro* (New York, 1944), pp. 241-242.

³ I. F. Stone, "Swastika Over the Senate," *Nation*, 162 (Feb. 9, 1946), 158.

⁴ Northrup, *op cit.*, pp. 2-9.

the AF of L and the CIO were FEPC members.⁵ Prior to the establishment of the FEPC, government agencies were also guilty of refusing to employ Negroes.⁶

Thus, there was a definite need for the FEPC; but up until May 27, 1943, the organization operated largely in an advisory capacity. At that time another Executive Order, No. 9346, was issued, creating a new commission with more powers, a permanent chairman, and a more vigorous membership. In January Manpower Commissioner Paul McNutt, by indefinitely postponing the hearings on the exposure of the anti-Negro railway coalition, had created a crisis in the career of the FEPC. Since the announcement of the scheduled hearings in October, the Negro press had proclaimed the move as a symbol of progress; Randolph considered this "the showdown test of the FEPC's power to outlaw Jim Crowism."⁷ Although McNutt had promised that other ways would be found to alleviate the railroad situation, the Negroes were bitterly disappointed by the failure of the FEPC in this case. There were other serious consequences: the entire progress made in Roosevelt's administration towards giving the minorities a break in employment was overshadowed, and the Axis powers were given a talking point against America's democratic pretensions. These reasons convinced the President of the need for a more effective FEPC. Francis J. Haas, an experienced labor conciliator, was chosen as the new chairman and the future looked brighter for the committee.⁸ He was "given the real chance to render the national service for which it was designed."⁹

Nevertheless, because the FEPC was based on the President's war powers and not on a statute,¹⁰ its operation and power were doomed to be weak. The actual procedure of settling a complaint consisted of several steps. First, a signed complaint against a specified employer, union, or government agency which stated the discriminatory practice was received by the Commission. A representative of the organization then investigated the complaint and attempted to work out a solution to eliminate the discrimination. If negotiations with the violator failed, the case was referred to the full Commission, which could hold public hearings on it. If discrimination was definitely established, the Commission issued a cease-and-desist order through the Circuit Court of Appeals, outlining the action to be taken by the violator. The only power of enforcement was the penalty imposed by the Circuit Court if the violator disregarded the order.¹¹ Often the procedure was the object of government intrigue and manipulations.¹² By working through the War Manpower Commission, the FEPC was able to deny violators govern-

⁵ *The Negro Worker*, American Management Association (New York, 1942), p. 14.

⁶ Northrup, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

⁷ J. A. Wechsler, "Pigeonhole for Negro Equality," *Nation*, 156 (Jan. 23, 1946), 121-122.

⁸ "Tough Assignment," *Business Week* (May 29, 1943), 100.

⁹ "Father Haas Tackles a Hard Assignment," *Christian Century*, 60 (June 2, 1943), 652.

¹⁰ Northrup, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-243.

¹¹ Stone, *loc. cit.*

¹² Wechsler, *loc. cit.*

ment contracts and assistance in securing employees. If all action failed, the President could use his war powers to enforce compliance with the FEPC directive.¹³

Despite its drawbacks and weaknesses, the FEPC was able to remove discriminatory practices in many places. Ten manufacturing plants in the Chicago-Milwaukee area were exposed in April, 1942, and, though there were not enough agents at the time to police the project, there was no showdown of this early order.¹⁴ At the Savannah Building Trades Council, Negroes were allowed to become a party to the contract with a ship construction company on December 8, 1942.¹⁵ Vultee's California airplane factory was ordered to employ Negroes.¹⁶ On November 19, 1942, the Gulf Shipbuilding Company received an FEPC order to cease discrimination, and, since then, Negroes have been employed in unskilled capacities.¹⁷ Negroes who had refused to join auxiliaries of the Boilermakers were discharged but rehired in July, 1943, as a result of an FEPC directive and a serious need for labor.¹⁸ In a dispute involving a Southern shipbuilding company and a craft union, in which the company claimed it would have hired the Negroes if the union had referred any skilled ones to it and the union claimed that no Negroes had passed the required test, the FEPC intervened and ordered the company to hire employees on the basis of skill and to make known its policy of non-discrimination. Also, it was required to submit monthly reports to the Commission concerning the number and the classification of new employees.¹⁹

The FEPC met with stubborn Southern resistance in many cases. When the Shell Oil Company was ordered to assign Mexicans to its work crews, the white workers struck and planned a walkout after thirty days if the segregation was refused.²⁰ Although Negro plumbers were given the right to join the Plumbers' Union in June, 1942, no Negroes have been admitted.²¹ Eighty Negroes were hurt at the Alabama Shipbuilding Company in a riot of May 25, 1943, when an order from the FEPC was issued to upgrade and train Negroes.²²

Considering the number of cases which were filed with the FEPC and the lack of funds and proper enforcement powers, the Commission's record speaks well for itself. In the 1943-1944 fiscal year, 3,030 of 5,133 cases were closed. From July, 1944, to July, 1945, 1,771 old cases were taken care of while 1,722 new complaints were received. With complaints coming in at the

¹³ "Should Congress Pass a Law Prohibiting Employment Discrimination?" *Congressional Digest*, 24 (June, 1945), 192. ¹⁴ Wechsler, *loc cit.*

¹⁵ Northrup, *op cit.*, p. 31. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 207. ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 216. ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

¹⁹ *The Negro Worker*, pp. 16-17.

²⁰ "Segregation Deal," *Business Week* (May 19, 1945), 107-108.

²¹ Northrup, *op. cit.*, p. 23. ²² *Ibid.*, pp. 225-227.

rate of 322 a month, and with 2,054 pending cases, the Commission was faced with an expanding program in 1945.²³

Congress has played a typically political role in FEPC legislation. In June, 1944, \$500,000 was appropriated for the FEPC from the President's emergency war funds after much Southern opposition to the measure. Although both Republicans and Democrats had pledged establishment of the FEPC in their 1944 platform campaigns,²⁴ the FEPC was able to get only \$250,000, less than half of what it had requested, in the 1945 appropriations bill. This bill was so ambiguous that both advocates and opponents claimed it to be in their favor. In one section the funds were to be used "for completely terminating the functions and duties of the FEPC" while in another they were "for continued operation of the FEPC if, and until, it is continued by an act of Congress."²⁵

Before the seventy-eighth Congress dissolved, bills had been introduced in both the House and the Senate for the establishment of a permanent FEPC. These were the first Congressional attempts to formulate a method of eliminating discrimination in employment, but both measures died with the seventy-eighth Congress.²⁶ With the opening of the new Congress, the Norton Bill, H. R. 2232, by Mary T. Norton, a Democrat from New Jersey, and the Chavez Bill, S.101, by Dennis Chavez, a Democrat from New Mexico,²⁷ were reintroduced and the long expected fight began. The Norton Bill was bottled up in the Rules Committee of the House, in spite of President Truman's appeal that the reconversion problem necessitated the immediate passing of it. At this time he said, "Discrimination in the matter of employment . . . is not only un-American in nature but will lead eventually to industrial strife and unrest."²⁸ In the Senate an interesting turn of affairs had occurred. Chavez brought his FEPC bill before the group unexpectedly on January 17, 1946, during the "morning hour" when debate could not be conducted. The next day Senator Overton of Louisiana started a filibuster by criticizing the punctuation of the *Congressional Journal*, while other Southern Senators gathered material for the seventeen-day deadlock.²⁹ Senator George's comment about the bill was, "If this is all that Harry Truman has to offer, God help the Democratic party in 1946 and 1948."³⁰ The sixteen Southerners were effective in their filibuster, more so because of the indifference of many Northern Senators and because of the support

²³ "FEPC Cutback," *Business Week* (July 21, 1945), 99.

²⁴ "FEPC," *Survey*, 81 (August, 1945), 209.

²⁵ "FEPC Cutback," *op. cit.*, p. 98.

²⁶ "Should Congress Pass a Law Prohibiting Employment Discrimination?" *op. cit.*, p. 167.

²⁷ I. F. Stone, "Jim Crow Flies High," *Nation*, 160 (June 23, 1945), 688.

²⁸ "Save the FEPC," *Nation*, 160 (June 16, 1945), 663.

²⁹ "Strictly from Dixie," *Time*, 47 (January 28, 1946), 22.

³⁰ "Birth of a Filibuster," *Newsweek*, 27 (January 28, 1946), 23-24.

of some Midwestern reactionaries.³¹ Not only were the Senators anti-Negro in their comments, but also anti-Jewish, Indian, Mexican, and consequently, anti-American. By talking this bill to death, "America declared her intolerance and hatred of one class against the other."³² The faith of millions of minority members was destroyed; but the Negroes were determined not to give up the first-class citizenship rights they had enjoyed under the FEPC.³³

In contrast to the Chavez Bill, which provides for outlawing discrimination by compulsion, the Taft Bill, S. 459, introduced by Robert Taft of Ohio, creates "an FEPC with power to set up regional commissions throughout the United States" which are authorized "to make investigations of alleged discrimination, to make recommendations, and to 'take every step to secure community interest and cooperation and voluntary compliance by employers and labor unions.'"³⁴ As a substitute for the Norton Bill in the House, the Hoffman Bill, H. R. 2495, makes discrimination illegal but makes no provisions for a committee to eliminate the practices. A person who has been discriminated against in securing or maintaining employment would have recourse in a Federal district court.³⁵

A promising outlook on the employment discrimination problem is the action of several states to secure anti-discrimination legislation. New York was the first state to take any such action. In 1909 the policy of forbidding discrimination "in jury service, in the right to practice law, and in admission to public schools and other places"³⁶ was begun, and through the years other laws have been created furthering this policy. New York claims the distinction of being the only state in the United States with a provision in its constitution prohibiting discrimination. The voters in 1938 adopted this provision: "Equal protection of laws; discrimination in civil rights prohibited."³⁷ The New York law provides for a State Commission Against Discrimination composed of five men who have the power to investigate the complaints received from employees and, if they are justifiable, to eliminate the unlawful employment practice by conferences. In the event that the complaints cannot be adequately settled by conciliation, the Commission holds hearings and issues cease-and-desist orders. Violators of the Commission's commands are punished by fines or imprisonment or both. However, emphasis is placed on education and conciliation rather than on punishment.³⁸

³¹ Stone, "Swastika over the Senate," *loc. cit.*

³² Harrison Smith, "Talked to Death," *Saturday Review of Literature*, 29 (March 9, 1946), 18. ³³ "Filibuster Kills FEPC Bill," *loc. cit.*

³⁴ "Should Congress Pass a Law Prohibiting Employment Discrimination?" *op. cit.*, p. 168. ³⁵ *Ibid.* ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165. ³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ R. S. Spitz, "State Legislation in Labor Relations and Discrimination in Employment, 1945," *Monthly Labor Review*, 61 (November, 1945), 990.

Other states have passed non-discrimination measures following the example of New York. New Jersey has a law, similar to that of New York's, which provides for a Division of Discrimination in its State Department of Education to recommend policies and educational programs and also provides for enforcement of its orders by court injunction. A Committee of Labor of Indiana stresses voluntary compliance with its suggestions, with elimination of discriminatory practices and their causes based on educational measures. A Wisconsin Industrial Commission is authorized to publish findings of its complaint cases after studying them, formulating programs, and making recommendations for the elimination of the discrimination.³⁹ As a result of the findings of an investigating committee appointed in the Utah Senate in 1945 to study the need for legislation against discrimination and the form to be passed, an FEPC law has been established in that state.⁴⁰

Within the past few months action here in Illinois has been started on the two bills before the House judiciary committee. On the University of Illinois campus the Inter-Fraternity Council endorsed a petition which was sent to the Illinois Congress in favor of a fair employment practices act.⁴¹ On March 19, proponents of such an act, who represented religious, racial, labor, veteran, and civic groups, testified at the General Assembly in favor of a permanent FEPC in Illinois. The Most Reverend Bernard J. Sheil stated that "the 'practicability' of an FEPC has been proved 'beyond a doubt' by the example set by the New York law."⁴² And Henry McGee, President of the Chicago Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, told the committee that "jobs which traditionally belonged to Negroes are being taken away from them" and also that employers seldom advertise for help without specifying color.⁴³

Just recently Minneapolis, Minnesota, has adopted a city ordinance which prohibits discriminatory practices and establishes a Commission on Job Discrimination. Penalties of \$100 or 90-day imprisonment for violation by employers with more than two employees or by labor unions are imposed by the city attorney after the Commission has recommended the complaints to him. The Commission also conducts studies and gives information on job discrimination.⁴⁴

Although few of the forty-nine bills which were introduced in twenty states during the first four months of 1945 were passed, there is an indication that many people are giving thought to the problem of discrimination. Negroes were the instigators of bills in Kansas, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania,

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 990-991.

⁴⁰ "FEPC Vote Portends Trouble to Come," *Christian Century*, 62 (July 25, 1945), 853.

⁴¹ *Daily Illini*, Champaign, Illinois (March, 1947), 1.

⁴² *Champaign-Urbana Courier*, Urbana, Illinois (March 19, 1947), 1.

⁴³ *Loc. cit.* ⁴⁴ "Municipal FEPC in Minneapolis," *Survey*, 83 (March, 1947), 86.

California, New Jersey, and West Virginia with the endorsement of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders, of state AF of L and CIO unions, and of civic organizations.⁴⁵ Many of these states which have not yet passed legislation are waiting to observe the success of the New York, New Jersey, and Indiana laws before passing similar measures. The outcome of the New York penal law compared to that of the Indiana educational law should exert a great deal of influence on the laws adopted by other states.⁴⁶

Proponents of permanent FEPC legislation proclaim that the "FEPC was the beginning of something vital in our country. It was an open announcement to the world that the United States, which had professed the noblest aims toward the rest of the world, was against racial discrimination at home."⁴⁷ The FEPC is needed to prevent the outbreak of race riots, similar to those which followed the first World War in 1919,⁴⁸ since a million Negro workers have been thrown into the labor market at the end of this war.⁴⁹ Racial tension is growing throughout the country, not only among the Negroes, but also among the Mexicans, the Japanese-Americans, and the Jews, tension which could culminate in "the whirlwind of oppression and revolt unless this bill [Chavez Bill] or another like it is soon passed by our legislatures."⁵⁰ Although the problem of upgrading and extending higher wages to minorities was difficult, even more serious is the problem of downgrading and laying-off members of these groups during the reconversion period. And now there is no FEPC to contend with the problems. "If the Federal government doesn't fill this gap by setting up an all-time FEPC, employers will be left out, since unions are establishing FEPC laws."⁵¹

Dennis Chavez, author of the Senate FEPC bill, offered the thought that opponents have misunderstood the fine work done by the FEPC. In his relations with the Mexicans, he has become aware of the discrimination practiced against them, and he insists "that the FEPC deals in many instances with matters affecting Mexican citizens in such a way that the little money spent by the Commission is of more help to the goodwill effects of this country [Mexico] than all the money we are spending through the Coordinator's office."⁵² Mary Norton, author of the similar bill in the House, believes "that this policy against discrimination so deeply rooted in our institutions must now receive adequate congressional affirmation."⁵³ Negro Representative Dawson from Illinois says, "The FEPC is seeking to lay the

⁴⁵ W. Moslow, "Fair Employment State by State," *Nation*, 160 (April 14, 1945), 410.

⁴⁶ "Should Congress Pass a Law Prohibiting Employment Discrimination?" *op cit.*, p. 166. ⁴⁷ Smith, *loc. cit.* ⁴⁸ Stone, "Jim Crow Flies High," *op. cit.*, p. 687.

⁴⁹ "FEPC Vote Portends Trouble to Come," *loc. cit.* ⁵⁰ Smith, *loc. cit.*

⁵¹ "Segregation Deal," *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁵² "Should Congress Pass a Law Prohibiting Employment Discrimination?" *op. cit.*, pp. 170, 172. ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

foundation for something that is of vital importance to the ideals of this Nation."⁵⁴ Representative La Follette is practical in his statement: "We are not attempting with this legislation to eliminate prejudice. . . . We are attempting to eliminate the outward effect of prejudice, which is discrimination."⁵⁵ In comparing the FEPC with the Prohibition Amendment, he claims that the failure of that Amendment was due to the attempt to remove the basic human feelings and desires, but the FEPC bill "is not calculated to nor does it attempt to change by legislation basic thinking."⁵⁶ In answer to the argument that the FEPC bill offers no educational value, he believes that "there is educational value inherent in the enforcement provisions of this legislation, that people will come closer together when they know there is behind a Federal agency a power eventually to enforce action, to prohibit discrimination."⁵⁷

The opponents of the FEPC have pointed to the fallacies and ineffectiveness of the bill. During the war the FEPC was unable to completely remove discriminatory practices in the railroads, public utilities, and many other industries, in spite of the desperate need for help and the idleness of thousands of minority members.⁵⁸ The clash over the bill has not been entirely due to its drastic provisions, but to the "underlying philosophy that tolerance and justice for minorities can be forced by law."⁵⁹

Representative Clark Fisher from Texas believes that "the measure would set up a colossal peacetime bureaucracy . . . regimentation far beyond anything ever before proposed in this country" and also remove property rights from employers.⁶⁰ Judge Herbert O'Brien from New York asks, "Is all of this American? Many of us do not believe it is."⁶¹ During the January filibuster, Senator George radically asserted, "We are called upon to go Nazi!" while Senator McClellan said, "This bill is the most vicious and destructive assault on human liberty that has ever been made in America."⁶² However, more sensible arguments were proposed by Senator Robert Taft from Ohio with his introduction of the Taft Bill: "As I see it, the compulsory act, if duplicated in every state as its proponents plan, will finally force every employer to choose his employees approximately in proportion to the division of races and religions in his district, because that will be his best defense to harassing suits."⁶³ His own bill would call for the development of different plans in different cities after a study of existing local conditions and the character of the local industries had shown the best method for eliminating discrimination in those specific places. He offers

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 178. ⁵⁶ *Ibid.* ⁵⁷ *Ibid.* ⁵⁸ Smith, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁹ "Should Congress Pass a Law Prohibiting Employment Discrimination?" *op. cit.*, p. 163. ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 179. ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 191. ⁶² Smith, *loc. cit.*

⁶³ "Should Congress Pass a Law Prohibiting Employment Discrimination?" *op. cit.*, p. 171.

another argument: "In my opinion any such compulsory measure will create more bad racial and religious feelings than any other method which can be pursued. I think it will do the colored race much more harm than good." For it he has this solution: "Progress against discrimination must be made gradually and must be made by voluntary cooperation and education with encouragement from a Federal Board . . . and state governments and boards and not by inviting thousands of lawsuits which will get beyond the control even of the FEPC itself."⁶⁴

The acuteness of the present employment discrimination problem necessitates some action, and if the only possible solution now is the establishment of the FEPC, I would advocate it. However, there are obvious weaknesses and fallacies in the FEPC bill, as it stands now, which would call for an improved set-up as the operation of the Commission continued. These changes could be made after the preliminary and most important step of establishing the FEPC has been completed.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

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My Discovery

HARLAN K. CORRIE

Rhetoric I, Theme 6, 1946-1947

GOODYEAR DISCOVERED VULCANIZATION BY ACCIDENT—ally dropping a bit of rubber onto a hot stove. Isaac Newton visualized the law of gravity by having his head under a falling apple at just the right time. Accidents, to be sure, account for many discoveries or inventions. The secret of making a boat model inside a bottle look antique I discovered by an accidental explosion.

I had just finished thrusting the last piece of the model through the neck of the bottle. The little schooner looked magnificent on her sea of bee's wax. There was something wrong, however. The inside of the bottle was smudged with wax. Before building the boat, I had melted chips of wax inside the bottle to make a flat surface for the model to sit on when the bottle lay on its side. The melting had left smears inside the bottle in several places. I solved the problem of cleaning the glass inside with a long-handled swab of cotton soaked in ether.

Still there was something wrong. The ship model looked too new. It should have cobwebs or something to give it an ancient look. I pondered the situation for several minutes, then gave up. I took up the task of putting finishing touches to the ship's rigging. Some excess thread had to be removed, and so I approached the loose ends through the bottle neck with a burning broom straw. Then the accident happened. Whoof! The ether fumes inside the bottle flashed red and shot out the neck. I was startled and my thumb burned. I fully expected the whole model to be burned completely. When the smoke inside cleared, however, I got a pleasant surprise. Instead of charred masts and smoldering hull, I saw only browned paper sail edges and cracked paint. The model looked like a rare antique. I smiled the smile of a veteran craftsman.

Radio Announcer: Exclamation Point

One kind of radio announcer is like the exclamation point. He is lively. He is the huckster of radio, the man with something to sell. The exclamation point always has his foot in the door, ready, willing, and able to go into his sales-talk on the slightest provocation. He bubbles with vitality. He is the Babbitt, the booster, and the Chamber of Commerce rolled into one. He has a message of vital importance which, true friend that he is, he is obliged to pass on to the listeners. In fact, he passes on his helpful hints as though they were head colds or a mouthful of hot, mashed potatoes. He is the most direct representative of radio's god incarnate, the sponsor. — R. G. STEUERT, Navy Pier

I Learn to Understand Black

VIRGINIA LUDWIG

Rhetoric I, Theme 11, 1946-1947

THE CHIEF NURSE WAS CAREFULLY EXPLAINING TO ME my new assignment. I tried to gather my stunned thoughts and to give my attention to what she was telling me. It appeared that I was to have charge of a ward of eighty Negro men. My experience with Negroes was limited to the few contacts I had had with the one Negro family that lived in my home town. Miss Carmody was still talking in an earnest tone.

"There has been a great deal of trouble on this ward. I believe one of the reasons is that the Southern nurse who has had charge has no sympathy for or interest in Negroes. You are to supervise the ward and see that no more trouble occurs. You are to begin your new assignment today, Miss Ludwig."

As I walked slowly down the hall, I felt miserable about the whole thing. The many stories I had heard about the ward went racing through my mind. Going up the stairs, however, I decided to be philosophical and accept the challenge offered me.

As I entered my new ward the clatter coming from the galley and the general boisterous laughing and talking gave me warning of what was to come. At the door, I stood listening to the men of the galley crew who were causing the commotion. One man after the other fell silent, and they all turned toward the door to look at their new nurse.

"Good morning, boys," I said. "Is this the way you maintain the peace and quiet of a hospital?"

A few of them grinned rather sheepishly, and a few others mumbled, "Good morning."

I continued down the ward, past the quiet rooms where the sickest patients were located, down the large, sunny room to my desk, which was placed in the center. I sat down and looked around — confusion, utter confusion. A large number of convalescing patients already were playing cards in groups about their bunks. Beds were not made, the floor was filthy, and the bed patients looked crumpled, mussed, and discontent. A slow wrath burned in me as I considered the pandemonium and the filth.

The ward medical officer appeared in the midst of the disorder. It was time for sick call. I introduced myself to the doctor, found the corpsman, who was reading a comic book in a secluded corner, and we called the boys to attention. After the doctor introduced me to the patients, I told them that all the up-patients were to report to the desk immediately after sick call.

The day wore on, one of the busiest days of my life. When three o'clock came, there was still much to do. The doctor was working frantically, and I volunteered to remain on duty to help him finish.

Dr. Reeves was a young Southern boy who had just returned from overseas duty with the Marine Corps. He confessed to me that not even overseas had he ever labored under such a heavy work schedule and such confusion. He could not understand the lack of cooperation and the belligerent manner of the boys. I told him I would do my best to help restore peace, order, and cleanliness to the ward.

As the week passed, I talked with each man I knew was capable of work and persuaded him to carry a light detail. Careful never to lose my temper, I made it a point to be pleasantly interested in each man and his problems. At first they did not know what to make of this attitude, and many were skeptical. If it became necessary to discipline anyone, I scolded the wrongdoer as if he were a child. I was firm in matters of discipline, something they seemed to expect of me. I always demanded a little more of them than they anticipated, and they slowly responded.

As the weeks passed, everyone settled down to the new routine. When I reported for duty in the morning, the work was usually well underway. The ward was clean, as a hospital ward should be, by the time Dr. Reeves made sick call. The boys were quiet as they went about their details, and smiles greeted us as we made morning rounds. We had more time to care for the sick boys who needed more attention. Dr. Reeves followed a schedule, too, that coincided with ours, and we were able to accomplish all the work between us.

I was surprised to find that I had become intensely interested in my work and looked forward to each new day of duty. The atmosphere was natural and jovial. The Negro boys seemed to have a great capacity for enjoying life even under trying circumstances. On the whole, they were happy, with no inhibitions in the manifestations of their moods. It was not unusual for one of them to burst into song in a superb voice, or for a group of them to harmonize some very lovely Negro spiritual. One boy used to carry sand in his dungarees, and when some good, rhythmical music was playing on the radio he would scatter the sand on the floor and do an intricate soft-shoe tap dance, to the delight of his fellow patients and me.

One day near Christmas time, I came back from my lunch hour to find a large, powerful Negro boy sitting on the floor in front of the doctor's office. He was sobbing like a child. Before I could reach him to find what the trouble was, a patient asked him what the matter was. He brokenly said that the doctor had refused him Christmas leave. The other boy laughed and called him "psycho." The massive Negro jumped to his feet and pulled out a knife which was concealed in his jacket. I ran up to them and took the

knife away immediately. I scolded them both, as they stood there hanging their heads like naughty children. Calling the master-at-arms I had the entire ward searched for knives; we collected over thirty of these mean-looking weapons. Thus it was I discovered my happy, good-natured boys had fierce tempers.

Brown was a tall, handsome Negro boy. He was more aggressive than the others, with a sharp and ready wit. He was the morale booster on the ward. Life was never dull when Brown was near. His favorite trick was to hop into bed, clothes and all, and pull the covers to his chin when he saw the Red Cross wagon coming with gifts for the bed patients. This always amused everyone, because he could look so sick and pitiful that the Red Cross girls would shower him with little gifts.

Most of the boys enjoyed gambling. This was not against the hospital rules providing they did not show their money while they played. They grew very careless about this rule, however, and I had to warn them that I would take any money I saw when they were playing. One afternoon there was a large pile of bills lying on a bunk in the middle of a group of very absorbed players. I had walked up behind them unnoticed and stood watching them play. Angry with them, I reached over and grabbed a large handful of bills. I can still shut my eyes and see one white arm reaching for the money amidst at least ten black ones. They were very unhappy about my breaking up their game and begged for their money. I knew, however, they had to be taught a lesson; so I asked the owner of the money what state he came from, and we walked down and donated the money to his state in the competitive national tuberculosis drive. After this I had no further trouble with gambling.

Christmas week came, and we had a big party planned. The Red Cross workers came, bringing refreshments, a moveable piano, and their record-making apparatus. Everyone had a gay time with much laughter and music. The boys presented me with a beautiful gift worth a great deal of money, purchased from Ship's Service. I knew they were poor and could not afford such an expensive gift, but when I looked up all I could see was white teeth and grinning black faces. I had never been so touched by a gift before in my life. I had known I liked them; now I knew they liked me, too.

Dr. Reeves announced that I had received my orders for a new station of duty. Several of the boys wanted to know when I was to be discharged from the Navy, and if I would need a cook or a house boy. These offers of service amused me, but I was touched by the loyalty that prompted them. Much to my amazement I found that the patients had drawn up and submitted to the chief nurse's office a petition signed by all eighty of the boys and by Dr. Reeves asking that I be allowed to remain on duty on their ward.

Since the Navy does not work that way, I knew their petition was useless; but it made me proud.

My experience with this group of Negro men taught me much. I gained a valuable insight into their character and habits. I have never had a tour of duty that was as pleasant and as interesting. Like any other human beings, if Negroes are given an opportunity to prove themselves, they will work hard, long, and well. They are happy, light-hearted, loyal, though perhaps too easily led—a weakness undoubtedly forced on them. My chief gain is a broader social outlook and a deep interest in the racial problem they present.

The Last Thought

CHARLES N. WATKINS

Rhetoric I, Theme 3, 1946-1947

IT HAS BEEN SAID BY MEN WHO HAVE LIVED DANGEROUSLY and have rubbed elbows with death on many occasions that a man's life unreels before his eyes in that last brief second. The fiction writer's hero, when faced with seemingly certain death, thinks of his beloved and is prepared to die with her name on his lips. Other persons say that the last thought is of prayer. Judged by these beliefs, I have not lived a life worth recalling: I either have no loved one or am not romantic enough to think of her, and I must have no religion, for several years ago I came face to face with death and experienced none of these emotions.

It all happened on a cool, starry, beautiful night in the summer of 1941. I had ridden my motorcycle to Sterling, early that evening, to see a pretty girl in whom I was deeply interested. The hours passed swiftly, and when I finally glanced at the clock, I swore softly to myself. "It's two o'clock in the morning," I thought to myself. "I've got to get to work by six." There was a lingering farewell, and I climbed astride the little Indian motorcycle. Moisture from the night air had condensed in the distributor cap, and it was with some difficulty that I coaxed the Indian to life. Racing the engine, I shifted to low gear and rode out of town as rapidly as the speed limit allowed.

Once past the city limit, I turned the throttle open as far as possible and settled myself for the journey home. The hand on the speedometer climbed steadily until it registered seventy miles per hour, which was the Indian's maximum speed. The air was cool and sweet on my face and arms, and plucked at my clothing with invisible fingers. I thought of the meager two hours of sleep I would have before work at six; slightly leaning over the

gasoline tanks, I readjusted the carburetor setting; the motor's demon-like song rose in pitch.

As we thundered over the crest of a small hill, I saw the red lights on the rear of a truck about one-half mile from me. No serious thoughts of caution came to my mind, however, as there was little traffic so early in the morning. With the difference in speed between the motorcycle and the truck, the distance between us narrowed to a matter of yards in a few seconds. Immediately in front of the truck, the road bent in an "S." The curves were short and sharp, and between the ends of the "S" lay a narrow canal bridge, some thirty yards long. It was impossible to see across the bridge and around the far curve because of the trees at the canal's edge, near the bridge.

It is difficult now to understand my thoughtlessness, and it is impossible to excuse it. Nevertheless, I began to pass the truck on the first curve. As the truck and I came upon the bridge, the front fenders of the two vehicles were side by side. Then everything happened at once. The events which took place in the next instant or two seemed to be part of a slow-motion movie, at which I was a disinterested spectator. Bright lights flashed from around the opposite curve; a car made the approach to the bridge, coming head-on at the truck and me. My only conscious thought was, "I can't make it. They'll fish me out of the river in the morning." For some odd reason, I made no attempt to apply the brakes or to cut the throttle; perhaps I was too bewildered. Suddenly, the driver in the car from the opposite direction applied his brakes; his car slid broadside across the concrete, then whipped back into its proper lane once more. Simultaneously with the righting of the coming car and its entrance to the bridge, the cycle and I sliced through the narrow gap between the car's front fender and the truck's heavy bumper, and continued down the road at seventy miles per hour.

A mile or so from the bridge, chills ran over me and cold sweat dribbled down my forehead. My knees banged and clattered on the sides of the gasoline tanks so fiercely that I could no longer control the machine. Stopping the engine, I parked on the shoulder by the side of the road and sat down in the damp grass. An hour elapsed before I gained sufficient composure to ride on.

Now, as I think of the incident, I remember my single thought as I waited for the oncoming car to crash me, "They'll fish me out of the river in the morning." There was no emotion of fear, not because I am brave, for I was thoroughly frightened afterward, but because there was not time to think of fear. I doubt very much whether men think of their dear ones or of their sins or even prayer when there is but a second to live. It seems more probable to me that a man's last thought is apt to be as ridiculous as mine, "They'll fish me out of the river in the morning!"

Black Boy by Richard Wright

LEE CADWELL

Rhetoric I, Theme 7, 1946-1947

RICHARD WRIGHT DID NOT WRITE *BLACK BOY* FOR THE purpose of arousing the pity of the white Americans for the Negroes. One naturally responds to this feeling as he reads of the injustices inflicted upon the Negroes, but he is much more aware of a strong, bitter feeling of anger and disgust for the Southern whites. Wright did not attempt to employ diplomacy in his writings; the brutal truth was far the more effective and impressive method of relating his story. Through the frankness and simplicity with which he attacked this book, he achieves a clearer understanding of the Southern white-Negro situation.

Black Boy is the story of Richard Wright's childhood and youth as a Southern Negro. Not one happy incident slipped into his miserable life to make it more bearable. His father deserted the family when Richard was only four; the children were left in an orphan's home when it became impossible for Mrs. Wright to support them; for a period of years the family's life consisted of a series of moving from one poor home to a poorer one; then Mrs. Wright became partially paralyzed and the family was forced to move into the strict grandmother's home where religion dominated every move. Constant, bitter arguments took place between Richard and his grandmother because he refused to adopt her religion, because he desired formal schooling, and because he was anxious to earn some money. Hunger lived with him throughout his childhood; it was "biting hunger, hunger that made my body aimlessly restless, hunger that left me on edge, that made my temper flare, hunger that made hate leap out of my heart like the dart of a serpent's tongue, hunger that created in me odd cravings." He accepted beatings matter-of-factly — beatings from his mother, grandmother, aunts, uncles, and teachers — beatings that often lashed him into unconsciousness. Early in his life he learned the expected treatment from the whites, but Richard's rebellious nature would not allow him to accept the set standard. "It was perhaps a mere accident that I had never killed," he admitted. Through his reading he became aware of the possibilities of happiness for Negroes in the North, and his main goal in life was "to go North."

Never can I remember experiencing more violent emotions while reading a book than I did while reading *Black Boy*. For those who can take the cold and cruel facts, digest them, and then understand better the Negro situation, Richard Wright has written *Black Boy*. After reading it, one is assured that America has a great deal to accomplish before it truly fulfills the democratic ideals which it claims.

Black Boy by Richard Wright

CAROLYN CLARK

Rhetoric II, Theme 13, 1946-1947

IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL *BLACK BOY*, RICHARD WRIGHT tells the story of his childhood — a thought-provoking tale of misery and hardship, of misunderstanding and heartbreak. The story is biased.

Wright was a sensitive, brilliant Negro boy who was born and raised in the Deep South. He was keenly aware of the inferior position which his race held because of their poverty and ignorance. The reader constantly feels the contrast between the intense, bitter struggle of Wright to overcome his heritage, and the hopeless, defeated acceptance of their miserable lot by the majority of his race. He raises his voice against the contempt and injustice with which the white people deal with the Negro.

In his great concern with the supremacy that the white people feel over the Negro, Wright gives no credit to the whites, and he represents them all as smug, uncouth, and domineering. He claims that the whites feel the Negroes were made by nature to be slaves to the "superior" race. In one of his early attempts to find employment a white woman scoffs at him because he says he wants to be a writer. She says, "Who on earth put that idea into your nigger head?" In this way, the whites offer the Negro no encouragement. It is true that the white people could do a great deal more toward improving racial conditions, but they cannot do it alone. It is up to the Negro to give a little, too, and not constantly to assert himself against the whites. Wright offers no solution to the problem and always represents himself as the underdog. He relates many more instances like the one mentioned, and altogether they form a sweeping condemnation of the white race.

The climax of the book comes when Wright decides to travel to the North, a paradise where he hopes to find happiness and achieve his ambitions. Throughout his childhood he had heard of it as a place where every man had a chance to make something of himself. The book ends with this hope, and we never know whether he attains his goal. The North, fundamentally, is not much different from the South, and so it is unlikely that anyone as embittered as Wright found it to be the heaven of which he had dreamed as a child.

Black Boy is itself a good example of race prejudice — against the white people. Many of Wright's tales seem greatly exaggerated and highly fantastic. The situation presented in the book is so discouraging and disheartening that one wonders, after reading it, whether the problem of race prejudice will ever be solved. Wright's writing is bitter and intense, difficult for a reader to put aside. His style is easy, his opinions clearly and forcefully expressed. Undoubtedly he is one of the ablest of our recent writers.

Early Pipe Organs and Their Development

WILLIAM C. MOORE

Rhetoric II, Theme 13, Summer, 1947

OF ALL THE BRANCHES OF HUMAN INDUSTRY IN THE development of which man has displayed versatility of talent, subtlety of intellect, or depth of spirituality, organ construction stands supreme.¹ The organ existed, history tells us, in the houses of wealthy Romans in 175 B.C.² From its crude, early beginning, it has been developed into the magnificent, awe-inspiring instrument we know today. To appreciate fully the modern instrument one must know its history.

The early Romans used the organ not only to entertain themselves and their guests in their homes, but also to heighten the pleasures of the theatres, circuses, and other amusement centers. The simple instruments the early Romans used had levers to operate the pipes, and utilized water power to operate the bellows which supplied air to the pipes.³ This, the earliest form of pipe organ known, was called "hydraulic." Its invention is ascribed to an Egyptian who lived in the second or third century B. C. The term "hydraulic," however, was a misnomer; water was used merely to give the necessary pressure to the bellows. Air was the "element" that gave, and still gives, the organ the basis for its operation. Because of the injurious effects of the dampness on the material and the mechanism of the early organs, the hydraulic organ passed into disuse during the fourteenth century after other and better means were discovered for supplying a constant pressure of air.⁴

After the well-to-do Romans tired of this instrument, the early Christians adopted the discarded organ for religious services in their places of worship, where it has held its important place ever since. Although it was Pope Vitalian (657-72) who ceremoniously introduced the organ into the church service, organs were not common in churches until the fourteenth century.⁵

These early church organs were fantastic instruments. The keys were from four to six inches broad, and they were struck by hard blows from the "organ-beater's" fist. A finger board with only nine keys was from four to five feet wide!⁶ Also, some of the early organs were made extremely costly by their decoration, jewels and precious metals being used in their

¹ R. I. Geare, "Evolution of the Organ," *Craftsman*, 7 (February, 1905), 549.

² C. W. Grimm, "Ideal Organ," *Etude*, 53 (September, 1935), 544.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Geare, *op. cit.*, pp. 549-50.

⁵ Grimm, *loc. cit.*

⁶ Geare, *op. cit.*, pp. 551-52.

enrichment. A convent near Madrid is said to have possessed an organ made entirely of silver.⁷ Evans says of an organ (which still plays) in the chapel of Frederiksborg, the celebrated castle of Danish kings, "The baroque case is of oak, and when the front doors are opened the pipes and screen above them present, with their exhibition of rare wood, overlaid ivory, gilding and other ornamentation, a characteristic picture of the fantasy of the Renaissance period and its delights of wanton luxury."⁸ Nearly all early organ builders were monks with a mechanical turn of mind;⁹ the organs still intact are a living tribute to their ability and artistic talent. But all that glitters is not gold; these organs had their drawbacks, too.

Perhaps the greatest drawback was the inefficient and unreliable air supply. The bellows were operated by several "bellow-boys," who, having a bellow fastened to each foot, pumped air by hanging onto a transverse bar and alternately raising and lowering each foot.¹⁰ We can imagine what urgings these bellow-boys needed from time to time to "do better work."¹¹ Another drawback, the unreliability of the connections between the keyboard and the pipes, led to the important art of registration. Because of these unreliable connections, organ builders began to arrange the sets of pipes so that they could be played by either of two manuals in case one manual broke down. It was soon discovered that by arranging different sets of pipes to the manuals, alternation and combination of tone colors could be accomplished.¹² This knowledge led to the invention of the pedal clavier by a Viennese, Bernhard, in 1418.¹³

Since the art of mechanics was in its infancy, these early organs were quite prone to disintegrate at crucial moments. A classic example of this phenomenon took place several centuries ago in Weingarten, Germany, when a bell clapper fell out of the monastic church tower while the organist was playing the bells and narrowly missed the bishop, who was arriving for a confirmation.¹⁴ Bless Progress!¹⁵

Few of these ancient organs are still in existence. "Religious fanaticism has been the chief cause of the destruction of the ancient organs, as it is

⁷ Arthur George Hill, *The Organ-Cases and Organs of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London, 1883-91), I, pp. 8-9.

⁸ C. H. Evans, "Historic Organs of Fredriksborg," *Etude*, 51 (March, 1933), 197.

⁹ William Harrison Barnes, *The Contemporary American Organ* (New York, 1930), p. 15.

¹⁰ Edward J. Hopkins, *The Organ, Its History and Construction* (New York, 1870), p. 34. ¹¹ Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 21. ¹² Grimm, *loc. cit.* ¹³ Geare, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

¹⁴ James Ingall Wedgwood, *Some Continental Organs and Their Makers* (London, 1910), p. 62.

¹⁵ If any incident of this sort has happened in recent times, the writer will retract this statement.

also responsible for the demolition of countless works of art which originally beautified the churches of Christian Europe."¹⁶ Perhaps the oldest organ in the world has been discovered at Aquincum, a former Roman settlement now a suburb of Budapest. An attached tablet states that the instrument was built in 228 A.D. The organ, consisting of fifty-two pipes, has been renovated and probably plays as well as ever.¹⁷ At the present time, it would be difficult to say how many of the ancient organs are still in existence in Europe. No doubt many were destroyed during the last war; their loss is incalculable.

The pipe organ, as we know it today, has changed little since the advent of electricity. With the invention of the electric fan blower, many churches graduated immediately from the bellows as a means of supplying air pressure.¹⁸ To solve the problem of faulty and unreliable action between the keyboard and the pipes, a Frenchman, Dr. Albert Peschard, invented electro-pneumatic action. This invention has proved to be a boon to organ action; the organist now is assured of positive and instantaneous action to the touch of the keys.¹⁹ Also, the advent of electricity has brought about the creation of the "toy-counter" effect which is so popular with theatre organ lovers. I am sure almost everyone has been entertained by the theatre organist using the bass drum, snare drum, Chinese block and tambourine, triangle, steam-boat whistle, auto horn, sand paper, and airplane effects.²⁰ The harp and chimes have become indispensable to most organs (including church organs) built of late.²¹

It would be a mistake to omit a description of the world's largest organ, for this organ has utilized all the inventions of recent times. Without the invention of the electric fan blower and electro-pneumatic action, an organ of this size would be an impossibility. This complex, colossal instrument, consisting of 32,882 tubes and costing nearly \$400,000, is situated in the Atlantic City municipal auditorium. To provide adequate volume to the auditorium, which seats 41,000 people, it is disposed in eight locations about the concert hall. The organ has two consoles, one at each end of the stage, on rotating platforms. The consoles consist of seven manuals and one pedal keyboard each, and they may be played simultaneously by two organists.²²

Such is the manifestation of today's organ-building genius, a far cry from the early "hydraulic" organ.

¹⁶ Hill, *op cit.*, p. 1.

¹⁷ "Oldest Organ Discovered at Aquincum," *Etude*, 55 (March, 1937), 208.

¹⁸ Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁹ George Laing Miller, *The Recent Revolution in Organ Building* (New York, 1913), p. 37.

²⁰ Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 136. ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

²² "World's Largest Organ Has Seven Manuals; Atlantic City's Municipal Auditorium," *Popular Mechanics*, 59 (March, 1933), 429.

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Best Movie of the Year

To Twentieth Century Fox's production of W. Somerset Maugham's novel, *The Razor's Edge*, I present—nothing. I commend the performances of its actors, Power, Tierney, Baxter, Payne, Webb, and Marshall to execution. To the final result of its mood music, shadowy remarks, overplayed and meaningless scenes, I comment, cheap.

Not having read Maugham's novel, I am guessing that Hollywood has very likely changed and excluded many basic ideas. I presume further that some of its stars were not good to it; surely Mr. Maugham was frantic at the horrible representation of a stuffed busybody Herbert Marshall attached to his name.

I will say, however, that *The Razor's Edge* has presented the best re-enactment of a "Rover boy" theme. Mr. Power roves.

Mr. Webb, I'm afraid, is in a rut. Look at his performances in *Laura*, or as Sheridan Whiteside in the stage version of *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and now at his part in *The Razor's Edge*—varied, aren't they? Gene Tierney ("The Bone"), still quite hysterical from her performance in *Leave Her to Heaven*, screams her way through the picture as the selfish Isabel. John Payne pouts and has a nervous breakdown, but doesn't get a chance to sing "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows" in this one. Anne Baxter, who might have come out tops, spoils it all by being too throaty too often. Herbert Marshall is something I've already commented on.

There is one scene in the picture which I think is worth all the rest, and the only one which means something. To the Austrian actor who plays the part of the coal miner and to that scene in which he appears I give all the awards that the picture has been given. To the rest of the cast I give the razor's edge.

—THOMAS A. VANDERSLICE

Definition: Wind

Wind is merely air that is blowing. About all wind does is to blow dirt in your eyes at the same time that it blows girls' skirts in the air. Cold fronts and warm fronts are solid pieces of blowing air, though it is sometimes doubted that these fronts really exist, as no one has ever seen one. —LES HOUSER

Soldiers and Horses

LESTER E. JACOBS

Rhetoric II, Theme 15, 1946-1947

THOUGH MOST PEOPLE THOUGHT OF THE UNITED States Army of World War II as a completely mechanized force, the powers-that-be did retain certain of their animal units for a long time after hostilities began. In fact, some of these units are still in existence.

It was my privilege, upon first entering the army, to train with one of these animal units, a horse-drawn field artillery battery, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Being a farm boy of some years' experience, I was quite satisfied with my first assignment. The whole experience was a pleasant one, but it was somewhat different from what I had expected.

We new trainees were first introduced to the artillery horse when we were assigned to "stable guard." Like all other military duty, this task was assigned by roster order, and each man took his turn. The tour of duty lasted twenty-four hours. During the daylight hours the stable guard was kept busy cleaning stables, sweeping exercise pens, carrying feed, grooming horses and harness, and performing the many other tasks necessary to proper care of the animals. At night, the duty consisted of patrolling the interior of the stable, each man being assigned two hours of this task at a time. Military guards performing this type of duty are usually armed, and the stable guard was no exception. The pitchfork was the weapon provided, and anyone familiar with this instrument and its operation can have no doubt about the use to which it was put on such occasions.

Having thus acquired a speaking acquaintance with our new friend, the artillery horse, we were next given riding instructions. With the beginning of this phase, we were forced into close association with an item of equipment known as the McClellan split-type saddle. This saddle is a device made of wood, leather, and metal which provides much seating surface where none is needed and a large split down the center where the seat should normally be. Experience proved, however, that this saddle is less an instrument of torture than we had supposed.

In our group of trainees, there were several persons who had had no previous experience with horses. On our first ride, one of these poor souls approached the drill sergeant. "Sergeant, I've never ridden before," he said. "That's O.K.," said the sergeant. "We'll give you a horse that has never been ridden, and you can start together." While this did not ease the man's mind, two hours in the saddle did just that. Though the seat of his discomfort had shifted somewhat, he was now confident of his ability to ride.

During the next several weeks, all the trainees in our group became skilled riders. Just as we were about to enter the next phase of training, word came that our horses were to be replaced by trucks, and we hurried to ready our animals for shipment to the remount station. Finally the day came. We took our mounts to the railroad station. On our return trip, we marched past the new trucks which were being brought in, and we felt a keen disappointment. No headlight winked and no tailgate swished in greeting along the entire line.

A Strip of Gauze, a Dab of Collodion

ALVIN J. BLASCO

Rhetoric I, Theme 7, 1946-1947

THEY ARE KNOWN AS "CAULIFLOWER EARS" TO ALL who know wrestling. They are the mark of the sport many men carry. The worse the disfiguration of the ears, the longer a man has probably wrestled. Yet, although they are quite common, cauliflower ears have made handsome men ugly only because their trainers have failed to adopt a technique of treatment that could have saved them permanent disfiguration.

No longer will wrestlers be plagued with the possibility of going through life with ugly ears. Out of the little training room in the Old Gym of the University of Illinois has come the cure for the "rassler's ear." Actually it is not a cure, but simply an application of several basic medical facts, which, when applied together, help to prevent permanent disfiguration.

A thin covering of tissue covers the veins in the ear. When it receives a blow of sufficient force, or is placed under strain great enough to break a vein, blood begins to seep into the ear tissue. At the same time the red corpuscles, acting in their capacity as a mending agent, arrive on the scene to begin healing. Accumulation of this fluid forms a puffed pocket around the broken blood vessel. If no immediate treatment is given to the ear following the injury, the solution hardens, scar tissue forms, and the cauliflower ear is born.

To prevent this from occurring, the "cast" technique has been developed by R. E. Klein, trainer of the University of Illinois wrestling team. So immediate has been its success and so widespread its reception that at the recent N.C.A.A. Wrestling Meet every competing coach requested information about this technique and treatment for wrestlers.

Treatment of the injury should begin as soon as possible after it occurs. With a hypodermic needle inserted in the pocket formed by the blood and red corpuscles all excess matter is removed. The success of this technique demands that all of the solution be taken out. Otherwise a certain amount of scar tissue will form.

After the removal of all the solution, strips of gauze coated with collodion are applied to the injured section of the ear. These strips are made to follow the original contours of the ear. As the collodion hardens, it forms a cast which is molded to the ear. This cast prevents another pocket of blood from forming, and maintains the original contour of the ear during the process of healing. After approximately a week the cast may be removed with an alcohol solution.

It is a simple technique. Yet, because it is simple, it has escaped trainers for years. But now that it is in use, wrestlers need no more fear the stamp of their sport, the ugly, puffed mass of flesh and tissue, the cauliflower ear, that was once a lifetime scar.

Potato to Potato Chip

GENE REILEY

Rhetoric I, Theme 10, 1947

PRACTICALLY EVERYONE HAS EATEN POTATO CHIPS AT one time or another, but few people actually know how they are made.

Although a few small companies still make potato chips by hand, the most successful way of making them is by machine. The best machines are made by the J. D. Ferry Company of Philadelphia and are commonly referred to as "Ferrying Machines."

Potatoes of any size or shape are dumped into the peeling section of the machine, and the process of making potato chips is begun. The peeler will peel a one-hundred-pound bag of potatoes in three and one-half minutes. Only seventy-five per cent of the skin is removed, as much of the food value of a potato is in the skin.

The potatoes pass from the peeler and are thoroughly washed by a continuous stream of water before passing into the slicer, which slices a bag of potatoes in about four minutes. The slices are approximately one thirty-second of an inch thick, and are given a vigorous washing to remove fifty per cent of the unneeded starch content.

From the slicer, the slices move along an uphill conveyor belt where they are given further washings, and where bad or faulty slices are removed by

hand. When the slices reach the crest of the conveyor belt, they are allowed to pause for about two minutes, so that excess water can be drained off.

After the slices have drained, they are automatically dumped, in lots of about fifteen pounds, into a two-hundred-fifty-gallon vat of boiling vegetable oil. This one hundred per cent pure vegetable oil is heated to three hundred fifty degrees Fahrenheit by a blow torch affair which burns fuel oil. The cooking vat is twelve feet long, and the slices are forced along by three giant metal arms, which move in a circular motion and keep the slices immersed in the boiling vegetable oil.

When the slices reach the end of the cooking vat, they are forced onto another uphill conveyor which is approximately four feet long. As they move up this conveyor, all excess vegetable oil drains from them; and as they dry, the slices become crisp, hot potato chips. As the chips reach the crest of the conveyor belt, they are automatically salted before being dumped into metal cans for cooling.

The chips are allowed to cool for forty-five minutes before being weighed and placed, by hand, in waxed cellophane bags. The bags are then boxed and made ready for shipment.

The whole process, from potato to potato chip, takes approximately nine minutes, and often potatoes which were in the ground at four A.M. are put on the market as potato chips at four P.M. of the same day.

Cotton Pic'n

I hadn't been in Oklahoma for more than a day when I came across the term "cotton pic'n." Quite common with the Oklahomans, it is almost unknown north of the Mason Dixon divide. The expression compares with the British "bloomin," and the American "darn." It's that handy, flexible little adjective that can be applied to almost anything displeasing or unfavorable.

I believe it was on a corner, while waiting for a street car, that I first encountered the term. Turning to the gentleman standing next to me, I asked, "How often do they run?" "Cain't tell," he replied, with a note of anger in his voice. "The cotton pic'n street cars run when eva they cotton pic'n please." I was impressed immediately; as the days passed I heard it used more and more often. During my brief stay down there, I heard children crying over their cotton pic'n toys, waiters complaining about their cotton pic'n tips, and cabbies complaining about the cotton pic'n roads.

Since I became quite familiar with the word, on one occasion I decided to use it on one of the native Oklahomans. I knew it was a term used to express disgust and anger, so I prepared an expression and awaited an opportunity to use it. I discovered too late that the Oklahomans are very temperamental about who use their language. It seems that I didn't say it quite right, and believe me I heard about it! Those cotton pic'n southerners think that you can't use their cotton pic'n terms unless you've got a cotton pic'n southern drawl. So I packed my grip and left that cotton pic'n Oklahoma and decided to forget that cotton pic'n word. — ROBERT WISS

Gentlemen:—

JOHN WEITER

Rhetoric II, Theme 14, 1946-1947

I STAND BEFORE YOU A CONDEMNED MAN. YOU HAVE branded me a criminal, and, as all criminals must be punished, so must I to pay for my crimes. And now you have graciously consented to allow me to speak on my behalf, to endeavor to sway your impending decision: that I must die a criminal's death.

What would you have me do, my judges, to attempt to stay the executioner's hand, to cheat the hangman's noose? Plead innocence, and throw the blame of my foul deeds, as you have so ably called them, upon the shoulders of another? Acknowledge my guilt, and plead to you for my life, in order that I might obtain whatever mercy you may spare me, as one spares scraps of food for a dog?

No, gentlemen! I shall follow neither of these courses. Nor will I go into a long discourse here to attempt to persuade you that what I am being tried for is no wrong committed by myself as an individual. To plead my innocence is as unnecessary as it is useless, for you know as well as I that I am innocent of any crime. You have tried me not because I was the commander of the army which destroyed a peasant village and its inhabitants, but because I was unfortunate to have fought for the wrong nation, and lost. For this reason do I stand before you today, on trial for my life, instead of reaping the fruits of victory as are your able commanders.

I am a soldier, gentlemen, who loves his country and who would travel to the ends of the earth to fight for her cause. Many years ago I swore allegiance to my country. At the same time I pledged myself to follow to the word all the commands of my superiors. Could it possibly be wrong for me to carry out these commands and perform my duties as a soldier? Yet because I did follow my orders, I am being tried for my life. Had I served under your flag and disobeyed my orders and shirked my duty, I should have been punished, as is only fit, and have been removed from my position of rank in disgrace. In my nation, too, all men were expected to serve faithfully beneath our flag, the colors of which we love as dearly as you love yours. It was as unthinkable for me to shirk my duty while commanding my troops as it is for you now, my judges, as you sit upon the seat of justice before me, to shirk your duty. Is my reward for faithful service to be death, the death, not of a soldier, but of a criminal?

After my army had entered the surrendered town of _____, the peasants killed, or shall I say murdered, the troops by night, sabotaged the

equipment, and relayed vital information concerning the nature and disposition of our troops and equipment to the enemy. I believe, gentlemen, that these activities are easily recognized as those of a spy. I also believe that the punishment for a spy in time of war is death in every nation of the world. Warning proclamations were issued against those who perpetrated these deeds, warning proclamations which threatened death to those caught and which were disregarded. The underground movements continued, and the men of the underground were sheltered by the citizens of the town. When their activities became so great as to hinder our war efforts, my superiors deemed it necessary to order me to destroy the menace, to wipe out the village. As an individual I regarded the deed unpleasant, to say the least. As a soldier I regarded the deed as my duty, and I had no other alternative but to carry out my orders. My duty lay in my loyalty and my obedience to those commands, and, as always, I carried out my commands.

Was it wrong for me, gentlemen, to act as would any good soldier serving under any flag of the world? Can what is clearly seen to have been my obligation be called my crime, a crime for which I am to suffer an ignominious death? If I am condemned for serving my country as a good soldier, let us then condemn all good soldiers in all nations for performing that which up to this time has been mistakenly and gloriously called their duty to their country instead of being rightfully called a crime.

What more can I add, my judges? If you take my life you prove that honor is not honorable, but an abominable thing, for surely there is no honor greater than service to one's country, and one cannot serve his country if he is disloyal to her representatives — his superiors. And I have done no other crime than to serve my country in her greatest time of need, which service you have termed dishonorable.

I shall not plead for my life, sirs, for you cannot kill me. If you place me into the hands of the executioner, when my body grows cold and stiff, and life no longer stirs my limbs, rather than pronounce me dead, say that I live. For I shall live. I shall live in the memories of men for many more years than my aging bones have yet to walk the earth if left to succumb in nature's own time. Is it not true that by my death you wish to remove me from the living? Would you prolong my life then when it is more important to you, if you issue a death proclamation upon me, that I die rather than live?

My life — the decision — is in your hands, O my judges. Ponder deeply before passing judgment. If you condemn me to death, you will take the life of an innocent man, whose words will follow you through the years. If you condemn me to death, you will defeat the very purpose for which you have condemned me — for I shall live.

Creed

WALTER THOMAS BROOKS

Rhetoric II, Theme 3, 1947-1948

We call this building a church. . . .
with spires pinching clouds above
an expression of humility
with fluted columns supporting nothing
the harbor of honesty
with frigid surfaces reflecting darkness
a church

We say the styles of the past. . . .
Romanesque
Byzantine
Provincial
Gothic
Renaissance
Baroque

are our forms for the future

We suggest that church design never changes. . . .
grotesque pillars of stone
ill-formed wooden benches
multi-crystaled chandeliers
cold marble pulpits and
statues

never changes

We have closed our church doors to the. . . .
sun
moon
star
stream
river
ocean
grass
plant
tree
sky

elements of nature

We believe that God endowed us with senses. . . .

taste
touch
smell
sight
hearing

religion is all of these

But we in our church. . . .

taste only food of thought
touch grotesque pillars of stone
smell stagnant air
feel ill-formed wooden benches
hear echoes on cold marble pulpits and
statues

lose religion

As He moves — so must we — and He has moved

If we pursue a new spirit of usage. . . .

Wood — with stone and brick
organic harmony

Glass expanses — integrating
outdoors and in

sun
moon
star
stream
river
ocean
grass
plant
tree
sky

Altar gardens of vegetation and
plant life

Steel — in thin bands that eliminate
shadow and dimension

If we find deceptive expression in
the vertical line of pride and ego

If we find integrity in
the oblique line of obeisance and
the horizontal line of domesticity

We will find our heritage — the earth —
our sanctuary

spreading like some giant body with
hands extended skyward and
legs entrenched in sin

We will see a structure. . . .
in the armchair of the universe
with nature as a footstool

an expression of humility

a harbor of honesty

a house of light

a church of God

Thoughts After a Hurricane

The wind from the south suddenly left the hills and streams of New England to waste itself upon the barren waters of the cold Atlantic. It left its wake in the remains of many a village and town. It also left the thoughts of men pondering on the worth of their losses. The wind left some who thought not of things it did but of reasons it came. Some thought it was retribution for the manner in which they had lived. They thought it the vengeance of a vengeful force which sought to gather penance from the people who had wronged. But they could not understand that the whole world would have had to suffer, that almost everybody had been intolerant and blissfully unaware of the good they could have done in their half-filled lives. A few, extremely few, thought it proved that nothing is stable, that there is nothing built which can stand the ravages of this tumultuous world. Those who thought of vengeance have gone back to their previous ways of life. It will not be until the next catastrophe strikes that they will think of anything more than themselves. And after that comes they will go back to their intolerances and gullibilities. Those who thought and came to the logical answer will remember it but will reap no benefit from it. Theirs will be a future which holds a lesson remembered — that's all. — ARTHUR H. STROMBERG

Definition: Weather

Weather is stuff that is happening all the time, even at night and on Sundays. Sometimes we are apt to forget about it, but it is still there. Weather is the sum total of the manifestations of the atmosphere that surrounds our planet, and these manifestations are varied and unpredictable in form. Weather is an important commodity and it behooves all of us to make an attempt to understand it. It is one thing to be caught in the rain unexpectedly; it is an entirely different situation to know that it is going to rain and then to get caught in it. Weathermen are misled by their scientific knowledge and equipment; they do not realize the simplicity of atmospheric conditions. Actually, weather is not difficult to understand if you analyze it with an open mind and the help of a very few instruments: your grandmother, a rusty barometer, a broken hygrometer, and your roommate's encyclopedia. — LES HOUSER

Rhet as Writ

The book is actually two love stories arranged and written in a manner that isn't tiring or boring. It is the courtship of Alf and Emmy, and K and Jenny with Pa as a humorous paralyzed character thrown in.

. . . .

The strong points of Mr. Akeley's book were that it was presented in a way that you could learn and still be interesting and thrilling.

. . . .

The boys through this development and taking their place in society will be better able to guide this country toward peace and security and friendliness.

. . . .

To know this man is just like being your own brother.

. . . .

We see that there is an acute need for an international language, Esperanto, with its simplicity and neutrality, should definitely be promoted toward this end, and that its merits are plenteous while its defects are exiguous.

. . . .

Why should a customer tip a bell boy in a hotel just for carrying customers' gripes to his room and opening the windows?

. . . .

Are we to let a single representative like John L. Lewis take the rain out of free people and run them amuck impetuously into strife?

. . . .

I preceeded to room 319 where I experienced the experience I will always remember. I had to fill out that long piece of paper called a stud list.

. . . .

To reiterate what I have said in the preceding paragraphs, I wish to say it again.